



**South Carolina Republican Party  
Katon Dawson, Chairman**

**2008 First-in-the-South Republican Party Presidential Primary  
Saturday, January 19, 2008**

**Background & History**

For more information, contact the South Carolina Republican Party  
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## **First-in-the-South: *The History of South Carolina's Republican Presidential Primary***

**Since 1980, no candidate has won the Republican nomination for president without winning South Carolina's Republican primary.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>2nd Place</b>
<b>1980</b>	Ronald Reagan	55%	John Connally
<b>1984</b>	Uncontested		
<b>1988</b>	George H.W. Bush	49%	Bob Dole
<b>1992</b>	George H.W. Bush	67%	Pat Buchanan
<b>1996</b>	Bob Dole	45%	Pat Buchanan
<b>2000</b>	George W. Bush	53%	John McCain
<b>2004</b>	Uncontested		

### **2000 First-in-the-South Republican Party Presidential Primary**

Then-Governor George W. Bush was propelled to the GOP nomination for president in 2000 after winning South Carolina's make-or-break GOP presidential primary. That year, 573,101 Republicans voted in the presidential primary. Bush was particularly strong in the Upstate where voter turnout was heaviest – winning Greenville (42,846/73,281 votes) and Spartanburg (21,736/37,159 votes) counties with 58%. Bush was also strong in the Midlands where he carried Lexington County (25,990/45,277) with 57% and Richland County (21,955/44,822 votes) with 49%. Sen. John McCain was strong on the coast where he carried Horry (14,763/27,735 votes) and Beaufort (11,276/21,212 votes) counties with 53% - though Bush carried Charleston (22,380/47,269 votes) with 47%.

**Governor George W. Bush, February 19, 2000:** "I believe because of this vote today that I will be the next President of the United States."

**Terry Neal, *Washington Post*, February 20, 2000:** "...a decisive victory in an important southern state that was a bellwether of conservative sentiment..."

***The State*, February 20, 2000:** "S.C. saves Bush"

**David Espo, *Associated Press*, February 20, 2000:** "South Carolina restored Bush's frontrunner credentials so badly shattered in New Hampshire..."

***FOX News*, February 20, 2000:** "Bush wins decisive victory in South Carolina primary."

***The State*, February, 21, 2000:** "South Carolina primary proves watershed for Bush. Victory could carry him to White House"

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **When is the 2008 First-in-the-South Republican Party Presidential Primary?**

SCGOP Chairman Katon Dawson on Thursday, August 9, 2007, announced the First-in-the-South Republican Party Presidential Primary will be held in South Carolina on **Saturday, January 19, 2008.**

### **How many voters participated in the 2000 First-in-the-South Republican Party Presidential Primary?**

573,101 South Carolina Republicans voted in the 2000 First-in-the South GOP Presidential Primary.

### **What is the historical significance of the First-in-the-South Republican Party Presidential Primary?**

Since 1980, no candidate has won the Republican nomination for president without winning South Carolina's Republican primary.

### **Do voters register by party in South Carolina?**

No. South Carolina does not have registration by party. Registered voters may vote in either the Republican Party presidential primary or the Democrat Party presidential primary – but not both.

### **Who administers the state's primaries? Has that changed in recent years?**

In years past, the SCGOP has set the date and administered the First-in-the-South Republican Party Presidential Primary. In 2008, however, the South Carolina Election Commission will administer the primary – in accordance with Senate Bill 99 which was passed by the South Carolina General Assembly in June 2007. While the SCGOP retained the power to set its primary date, the election commission is charged with officially tallying votes in the 2008 presidential primary.

### **Are South Carolina's Delegates and Alternates to the Republican National Convention bound to vote for the winner of the South Carolina Republican Party Presidential Primary at the convention?**

In accordance with SCGOP Rule 11 b.4, at-Large Delegates and Congressional District Delegates must vote for the candidate which won their respective jurisdiction (statewide or congressional district, respectively) on the first two ballots for a presidential nominee. If an Alternate moves up to Delegate status he or she must vote how their corresponding Delegate is bound to vote.

## **South Carolina: *Republican stronghold***

### **South Carolina Republican Party Chairman Katon Dawson**

Katon Dawson, president/general manager of family-owned Burns Auto Parts, Inc., was elected SCGOP Chairman in Spring 2002 and unanimously re-elected in 2004 and 2006. He has been recognized nationally for preserving SC's First-in-the-South GOP Presidential Primary status. As Chairman, Dawson has turned the Party's financial deficit into a large surplus with aggressive fundraising and sound fiscal management. Under Dawson's leadership, Republican Lindsey Graham was elected in 2002 to succeed Sen. Strom Thurmond; Republican Mark Sanford in 2002 defeated incumbent Democrat Gov. Jim Hodges and was re-elected in 2006; and Republican Jim DeMint was elected in 2004 to succeed Democrat Sen. Fritz Hollings. Dawson was a regional captain of then-Gov. George W. Bush's 2000 presidential campaign. Dawson also served as co-Chairman of SC's delegation to the 2004 Republican National Convention and President of the 2004 SC Electoral College.

### **South Carolina Republican Firsts**

**1st Republican Governor since Reconstruction:** Gov. James B. Edwards (elected in 1974)

**1st two-term Republican Governor:** Gov. Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., (elected 1986, re-elected 1990)

**1st Republican State House Speaker in the south since Reconstruction:** David Wilkins (elected 1994)

**Republicans gain control of State House of Representatives:** 1994

**Republican gain control of State Senate:** 2000

**Republicans control General Assembly, Governor's Office for first time since Reconstruction:** 2002

### **South Carolina in the U.S. Congress**

South Carolina's U.S. Senators are Republicans (Sen. Lindsey Graham elected in 2002 and Sen. Jim DeMint elected in 2004). Republicans hold both South Carolina seats for first time since Reconstruction.

Four of South Carolina's six members of the U.S. House of Representatives are Republicans: Henry Brown (SC-01), Joe Wilson (SC-02), J. Gresham Barrett (SC-03) and Bob Inglis (SC-04).

### **South Carolina's Statewide Constitutional Office Holders**

Republicans hold 8 of 9 statewide offices: Gov. Mark Sanford, Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer, Attorney General Henry McMaster, Treasurer Converse Chellis, Secretary of State Mark Hammond, Adjutant General Stan Spears, Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom and Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers.

### **South Carolina's General Assembly**

Republicans hold the majority in both houses of the South Carolina General Assembly: State House of Representatives – 73 Republicans, 51 Democrats and the State Senate - 27 Republicans, 19 Democrats.